

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1 1. A method of operating a server machine to perform server actions, the method
2 comprising:
3 storing, at a location accessible to said server machine, a template for use in
4 performing server actions, wherein the template includes
5 a field, and
6 attribute data associated with the field,
7 wherein the attribute data indicates whether it is necessary to obtain information to
8 complete the field from users of the template;
9 receiving a request from a client machine for performance of a server action using the
10 template; and
11 in response to the request, performing a server action using the template wherein the
12 step of performing the server action includes:
13 determining from the attribute data whether it is necessary to obtain
14 information to complete the field;
15 if it is not necessary to obtain information to complete the field, then
16 performing the server action without obtaining information from the
17 client machine to complete the field; and
18 if it is necessary to obtain information to complete the field, then obtaining
19 information from the client machine to complete the field prior to
20 performing the server action.

1 2. The method of Claim 1 further comprising the step of, prior to storing the template,
2 producing the template based on user input received from a second client machine
3 that is different from said client machine.

1 3. The method of Claim 2 wherein
2 the step of producing the template includes:
3 receiving user input that indicates that said field is editable, and
4 receiving user input that specifies a candidate value for said field; and
5 the step of obtaining information from the client machine includes:
6 transmitting the candidate value to said client machine; and
7 receiving a signal from said client machine that indicates that said candidate
8 value is to be used for said field during said server action.

1 4. The method of claim 2 wherein the second client machine includes a display and
2 keyboard that are not part of the client machine.

1 5. The method of claim 4 in which the display and keyboard are part of a workstation or
2 personal computer that communicates with the server machine through a network.

1 6. The method of claim 5 in which the network is an Internet.

1 7. The method of claim 1 in which the client machine is machine from a set that consists
2 of a portable telephone and a personal digital assistant.

1 8. The method of claim 1 in which the server action is creation of a message.

1 9. The method of claim 8 in which the field is an address field.

1 10. The method of claim 9 wherein:
2 the field is a to-address field;

3 the template further includes a message type item of data indicating whether the
4 message is a reply to an existing message;
5 the method further comprises, performing the following steps if it is not necessary to
6 obtain information to complete the field:
7 determining from the message type item of data whether the message is a
8 reply; and
9 if the message is a reply, then automatically extracting an address from the
10 existing message to complete the field.

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1 11. The method of claim 10 wherein:
2 the template further includes an address item of data indicating an address; and
3 the method further comprises the step of using the address item of data to complete
4 the field if the message is not a reply.

1 12. The method of claim 8 in which the field is a subject field.

1 13. The method of claim 12 wherein:
2 the template further includes a message type item of data indicating whether the
3 message is derived from an existing message;
4 the method further includes performing the following steps if it is necessary to obtain
5 information to complete the field:
6 determining from the message type item of data whether the message is
7 derived from an existing message; and
8 if the message is derived from an existing message, automatically extracting a
9 subject from the existing message to complete the field.

1 14. The method of claim 13 wherein:
2 the template further includes a subject item of data indicating a subject;
3 the method further comprises the step of using the subject item of data to complete
4 the field if the message is not derived from an existing message.

1 15. The method of claim 8 wherein:
2 the field is a body field;
3 the template further includes a body item of data indicating a message body; and
4 the method further comprises the step of using the body item of data to complete the
5 field if it is not necessary to obtain information to complete the field.

1 16. The method of claim 1 in which the server action is scheduling an appointment.

1 17. The method of claim 1 in which the server action is submission of a database query.

1 18. The method of claim 1 in which the attribute data includes a flag bit indicating
2 whether it is necessary to obtain information to complete the field.

1 19. A method of performing server actions that require user input, the method comprising
2 the steps of:
3 storing, at a location accessible to a server machine, a plurality of templates
4 associated with a plurality of server actions that the server machine can
5 perform;
6 receiving, from a client machine, a request to perform a particular server action of
7 said plurality of server actions;
8 determining, from said plurality of templates, a set of templates that are associated
9 with said particular server action;

10 transmitting to said client machine information that allows a user of said client
11 machine to select a particular template in said set of templates;
12 receiving, from the client machine, a signal that selects said particular template; and
13 performing said particular service using data from said template as at least a portion
14 of the user input required for said particular service.

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1 20. A method of performing server actions, the method comprising the steps of:
2 receiving first user input for a template;
3 storing said template at a location accessible to a server machine;
4 after said template has been stored, receiving from a client machine a request to
5 perform a server action that requires user input for a plurality of fields;
6 receiving a signal from said client machine that indicates whether to use said template
7 to perform said server action;
8 if said signal indicates to use said template to perform said server action, then
9 performing said server action using said first user input as user input for one
10 or more of said plurality of fields;
11 if said signal indicates to not use any template to perform said server action, then
12 performing the steps of:
13 requesting user input for said plurality of fields from said client machine; and
14 performing said server action using user input received from said client
15 machine for said plurality of fields.

1 21. The method of Claim 20 wherein:
2 the step of receiving first user input includes receiving a candidate value for a first
3 field of said plurality of fields;
4 the method further includes performing the following steps when said signal
5 indicates to use said template to perform said server action:

6 transmitting to said client machine said candidate value; and
7 causing said client machine to provide to a user of said client machine an
8 option of selecting said candidate value as the user input to use for said
9 first field during performance of said server action.

1 22. The method of Claim 20 wherein the step of performing said server action using said
2 first user input as user input for one or more of said plurality of fields includes
3 performing said server action using a portion of said first user input as user input for
4 one of said plurality of fields without transmitting said portion of said first user input
5 to said client machine.

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2 A1 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 23. The method of Claim 20 wherein:
the step of receiving first user input for the template includes receiving user input that
designates, for each of said plurality of fields, whether the field is editable;
and
the step of performing said server action using said first user input as user input for
one or more of said plurality of fields includes
using said first user input for the fields of said plurality of fields that are not
designated editable; and
sending to said client machine requests for user input for the fields of said
plurality of fields that are designated editable.

1 24. A computer-readable medium carrying instructions for performing server actions, the
2 instructions including instructions for performing the steps of:
3 receiving first user input for a template;
4 storing said template at a location accessible to a server machine;

5 after said template has been stored, receiving from a client machine a request to
6 perform a server action that requires user input for a plurality of fields;
7 receiving a signal from said client machine that indicates whether to use said template
8 to perform said server action;
9 if said signal indicates to use said template to perform said server action, then
10 performing said server action using said first user input as user input for one
11 or more of said plurality of fields;
12 if said signal indicates to not use any template to perform said server action, then
13 performing the steps of:
14 requesting user input for said plurality of fields from said client machine; and
15 performing said server action using user input received from said client
16 machine for said plurality of fields.

1 25. The computer-readable medium of Claim 24 wherein:
2 the step of receiving first user input includes receiving a candidate value for a first
3 field of said plurality of fields;
4 the computer-readable medium further includes instructions for performing the
5 following steps when said signal indicates to use said template to perform said
6 server action:
7 transmitting to said client machine said candidate value; and
8 causing said client machine to provide to a user of said client machine an
9 option of selecting said candidate value as the user input to use for said
10 first field during performance of said server action.

1 26. The computer-readable medium of Claim 24 wherein the step of performing said
2 server action using said first user input as user input for one or more of said plurality
3 of fields includes performing said server action using a portion of said first user input

4 as user input for one of said plurality of fields without transmitting said portion of
5 said first user input to said client machine.

1 27. The computer-readable medium of Claim 24 wherein:
2 the step of receiving first user input for the template includes receiving user input that
3 designates, for each of said plurality of fields, whether the field is editable;
4 and
5 the step of performing said server action using said first user input as user input for
6 one or more of said plurality of fields includes
7 using said first user input for the fields of said plurality of fields that are not
8 designated editable; and
9 sending to said client machine requests for user input for the fields of said
10 plurality of fields that are designated editable.

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